

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9562
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 5186

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT MILI ASEC LE
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION, SEPT. 7, 1978, 1200 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 5160 (DTG 061003Z SEP 78)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THERE WAS MORE FIGHTING IN THE BEIRUT SUBURBS
IN THE EVENING OF SEPTEMBER 6-7, BUT AS OF 1200 HOURS THE AREA
IS GENERALLY CALM. PRIME MINISTER AL HOSS REPORTEDLY SAID HE
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WISHED TO RESIGN. PIERRE GEMAYEL SAID THAT ONLY GOD COULD JUDGE
SAAD HAADAD AND SAMI SHIDIAQ. EDUCATION MINISTER ANNOUNCED THAT
A FINAL DECISION ON THE TIME AND PLACE OF THE HIGH SCHOOL
BACCALAUREATE EXAMINATIONS WOULD BE TAKEN TODAY. END SUMMARY.

2. BEIRUT SITUATION.

A. IN THE SUBURBS SOUTH OF BEIRUT CHRISTIAN MILITIAMEN AND SYRIAN SOLDIERS EXCHANGED FIRE THE EVENING OF SEPTEMBER 6-7, ACCORDING TO L'ORIENT-LE JOUR. A FEW ROUNDS HIT THE DEFENSE MINISTRY COMPOUND AT YARZE, BREAKING SOME WINDOWS BUT CAUSING NO CASUALTIES, THE PAPER SAID. IKE CITED RELIABLE SOURCES AS SAYING THE PHALANGISTS AND NATIONAL MILITIAMEN HAD FIRED THE ROUNDS. OFFICIALS AT THE DEFENSE MINISTRY, HOWEVER, DENIED TO US ANY ROUNDS HAD FALLEN WITHIN THE COMPOUND.

B. FROM ABOUT 1800-2400 HOURS SEPTEMBER 6 THERE WAS AGAIN FIGHTING IN THE AYN AR-RUMMANEH AREA. ONE SYRIAN SOLDIER WAS WOUNDED, ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS.

C. AS OF 1200 HOURS SEPTEMBER 7, THE BEIRUT AREA IS GENERALLY CALM. TRAFFIC BETWEEN EAST AND WEST BEIRUT IS HEAVY.

3. PRIME MINISTER REPORTEDLY WISHES TO RESIGN.

L'ORIENT-LE JOUR REPORTED ON SEPTEMBER 6 THAT PRIME MINISTER SALIM AL HOSS HAD TOLD THE PRESIDENCY THAT HE WISHED TO RESIGN FOR REASONS OF HEALTH, AS SOON AS CIRCUMSTANCES PERMIT THE INSTALLATION OF A NEW CABINET. (COMMENT: VARIOUS SOURCES REPORT THAT PRESIDENT SARKIS WILL AGAIN ATTEMPT TO FORM A POLITICAL CABINET. WHEN PRIME MINISTER AL HOSS PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED HIS RESIGNATION IN APRIL, PRESIDENT SARKIS TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO FORM A POLITICAL CABINET. HOSS SUBSEQUENTLY WITHDREW HIS
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RESIGNATION. END COMMENT).

4. PIERRE GEMAYEL ON SAAD HAADAD AND SAMI SHIDIAQ.

PHALANGE PARTY LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL DECLARED SEPTEMBER 6 THAT "ONLY GOD CAN JUDGE" SAAD HAADAD AND SAMI SHIDIAQ THE LEADERS OF THE CHRISTIAN FIGHTERS IN SOUTH LEBANON. GEMAYEL WAS COMMENTING ON THE LETTER DELIVERED TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON SEPTEMBER 4 BY LEBANESE AMBASSADOR TO THE UN GHASSEN TUEINI. THE LETTER CALLED ON THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO CONSIDER REDEFINING THE ROLE OF UNIFIL AND SAID THAT HAADAD AND SHIDIAQ DID NOT REPRESENT THE LEBANESE ARMY AND WERE NOT EMPOWERED TO ACT ON ITS BEHALF IN ANY CAPACITY.

5. BACCALAUREATE EXAMINATIONS.

EDUCATION MINISTER ASSAD RIZK ANNOUNCED SEPTEMBER 6 THAT A FINAL DECISION ON THE TIME AND PLACE OF THE HIGH SCHOOL BACCALAUREATE EXAMINATIONS WOULD BE TAKEN TODAY (SEPTEMBER 7). HE MADE THE ANNOUNCEMENT AMID INCREASING DEMANDS, PARTICULARLY ON THE PART OF THE MARONITE PARTIES, THAT THE BACCALAUREATE I EXAMINATION BE CANCELLED FOR THIS YEAR AND THAT THE BACCALAUREATE II EXAMI-

NATIONS BE POSTPONED DUE TO THE CURRENT SECURITY CONDITIONS.
(THE MARONITE PARTIES WISH POSTPONEMENT IN LARGE PART BECAUSE
MANY OF THEIR YOUNG MEN HAVE BEEN MANNING THE BARRICADES RATHER
THAN STUDYING FOR EXAMS.)
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